

TEN TIPS ON UNDERSTANDING BIBLE PROPHECY



1. Determine to believe what Jesus and the writers of the New Testament taught, even if it conflicts with your denominational teaching or popular perceptions. Don't read your preferences and presuppositions into the text.
2. Step out of your sectarian echo chamber and immerse yourself in the Word. Especially in eschatology, there are several diverse and contradictory views. Don't assume that your sect has it right.
3. Don't give lip service to Sola Scriptura—embrace it.
4. When reading the Bible, take yourself out of our modern setting, and stand in the shoes of the original audience. How would the original audience have understood a particular passage? Audience relevance is critical.
5. Remember that the Bible was written FOR us, but not TO us. When we read the Bible, we are reading someone else's mail.
6. Understand that to grasp what the New Testament teaches about prophecy, you will have to do a little work to understand what the Old Testament taught. What do phrases like "coming on clouds of heaven," "the sun will not give its light," "the heavens will be shaken," "the moon will turn to blood," "abomination of desolation," "the lesson from the fig tree," "the time of the end," "baptism by fire," and so forth—mean in the Old Testament? (It may be different than you assume.)
7. Don't twist Scripture by giving unbiblical (and non-dictionary) meanings to "soon," "at hand," "before some of those standing here taste death," "must shortly take place," "this generation." The plain meaning is usually the best. Remember that God gave us his Word in language that has meaning that He expected humans to understand.

8. Let Scripture interpret Scripture, rather than the daily newspaper interpret Scripture.
9. Test all things, as Scripture instructs (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Your current understanding may be tainted by non-biblical teaching.
10. Be a Berean like those in Acts 17:11. Search the Scriptures to see if what you have been taught is so.

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